

## with Tom Hopkins

**After successfully teaching millions of people his secrets of selling, Tom Hopkins shares his personal philosophy of success and winning.**

**Tell us about your background in sales and why you like it so much?**

I'm not an educated man because I didn't go to college. When I finished high school I realized that I could be a construction worker, which I did for a year, or I could use my communication skills and talents in some way. Fortunately, I found real estate as my niche. I tell people to find a niche in life, something you love to do that isn't really work, and then do it better than most people so that others want to learn from you.

Take the great golfers Jack Nicklaus and Tiger Woods for example. They didn't look at golf as a way to make money. They just loved the sport and got so good at it that people paid them lots of money because of their talent.

That's what happened to me in real estate. I loved selling homes and after eight years I set records for number of home sales in Phoenix. No one could believe that I could sell one home every day for a year. It had never been done and has never been done since. That's when people started paying me to teach them how to be successful.

**What is your specialty in teaching people?**

I teach the art of closing a property sale, which is the same as selling any product or service. That includes how to ask the right questions, how to become a good listener and how to lead people to the decision of saying yes. That is an art form that all of us really need to learn because I think great parents lead their children to the right choices and great spouses lead the other spouse to a closer relationship. So if you look at selling as helping people make the right decision, then in a way all of us are in sales. As

professionals, we are always selling ourselves, our ideas and our concepts.

**How do you define success?**

I have a definition that I make my students learn because I think it applies to every person in the world, regardless of their level of achievement. Success is the continuous journey towards the achievement of predetermined worthwhile goals.

The continuous journey means that you constantly strive toward total success. People that think they have arrived at success can become proud or immobilized.

Predetermined means that you determine your goals in advance and in writing. You don't just let things happen; you're proactive.

Worthwhile is a very important word in my definition because worthwhile, as in worthy, means you must have a self esteem and self image that is worthy of your success. I often see people who achieve a high level of accomplishment or success but don't have the foundation of a positive self image. They don't believe they're worthy of success and are thus unable to keep the income, the money and the success. They make bad choices and lose that success because they didn't see themselves as being worthy of the success they achieved.

**How does faith relate to having a positive self image and being successful?**

I define faith as believing in something unseen and most people have some type of faith. I have a little saying that I ask my students to learn: "I have faith, courage and enthusiasm!" I think you need those three things to be successful both in the business world and in your personal and



spiritual life. You need to have faith in yourself, faith in your country, faith in your belief system, faith in your abilities and, most importantly, faith in the promises of God.

You also need to couple courage with faith. Courage is doing the things you don't want to do, which is what makes successful people successful. They have disciplines in their lives that average people don't.

Enthusiasm is such an important part of life too. You should be an excited, enthusiastic, loving person who has this feeling that you are going to succeed while serving your fellow man today. These are the attitudes I feel are important when you talk about this thing called faith. It means believing that things are going to be the way they should in my life because of who God is and because he cares for me.

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status, are all created by God and are equal in His sight, then that means I should treat everyone with respect and dignity. It means I not be judgmental and that is how I try to operate in all my professional and personal relationships. I think relationships are one of the most precious aspects of life. Sometimes we spend too much time on things and functions and too little time on nurturing, fostering and developing the proper relationships with God and with people.


“Surrounding myself with quality people has been very instrumental to my success.”

### Q What advice would you give people in the aftermath of September 11th?

I think the natural human reaction is to try to retreat to safety. We tend to fear the consequences of unforeseen future events. I think September 11th reminds us that our safety cannot be in things that we can't control but ultimately must rest in God

who knows and can control the future. God and his goodness will prevail over evil and therefore we can go forward boldly without fear. Our future under our control is uncertain, but when we place our future in God's hands we can move forward with confidence. There is really nothing that we can do externally to guarantee our safety and our future. All the more reason why we need to throw ourselves into the arms of God and go into the future with the security and protection only he can give us.

### Q What qualities of leadership are most important today?

It is important for leaders to have a vision and to be able to communicate that vision to the people with whom they lead. They must then release those people to fulfill that vision as part of a team. Conveying that every member of the team plays an important role in the fulfillment of that vision is critical, no matter what a person's title within the organization. So I think having a vision, sharing the vision with the team, and making sure that everybody feels like they are part of the effort, are very important aspects of leadership. 

*Daniel R. Coats is the U.S. Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Germany, having been appointed by President George W. Bush and sworn in on August 15, 2001. A former member of Congress, Ambassador Coats represented the state of Indiana in the U.S. Senate from 1989 to 1999, and in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1981 to 1988.*

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### What are some important qualities of leadership that are needed today?

A great leader first of all, has an attitude of expectancy in everything they do. They expect their company to win, they expect their people to win and they expect to win themselves.


They also are willing to do whatever they ask their subordinates or their people to do. They won't ask others to do what they don't do. It's called servant leadership. They are out in front of their troops, if you will. For example, if they want employees to go to an educational experience, the leader will also go.

They also do their best to block negativity from the people that are following them. I like to say that a great leader passes negatives up and only positives down in their leadership position. If something is negative or challenging they

discuss it with their superiors but the leader blocks the negative from affecting the people that are following them. They try to give positives down and negatives up in their leadership and their attitude.

A great leader believes when everyone else doubts. They have the belief that their company is going to survive, they are going to do well and they won't give up until it's a reality. Give me an hour with an employee of a company and I'll tell you what the owner or the president is like, because there is a whole attitude that goes down into the employees of a company. If there is a very negative, tyrannical leader or manager then I find a lot of the people working for him are just the same. If there is an excited, honest leader then that prevails throughout the company as well.

### What advice would you give to people as they consider their priorities today?

The first priority in life today should be to make sure that your eternity is taken care of. That's one of the key lessons of September 11. I talk a lot about success and I gave you my definition: the continuous journey towards the achievement of predetermined worthwhile goals. But happiness is not success. My definition of happiness is having peace and joy, knowing who you are, why you are here on this planet and where you will spend eternity. Because if you know who you are, as a child of God, and why you are here and where you're going after you die, then fear melts away and you can be a winner in life each and every day. 

*Tom Hopkins is a legend in the world of sales. At one point in his career, he sold at least one house per day for an entire year. He has personally trained over three million students on five continents as well as authoring eight books, including the best-sellers How to Master the Art of Selling and Selling for Dummies.*